

### **Amendments To The Claims**

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

#### **Listing of Claims:**

1. (currently amended) A composite starter block having a unitary construction for facilitating the subsequent positioning of shingles upon a hip roof, said starter block comprising:

a top surface, two side surfaces, a front surface and a back surface[[,]];

wherein each of said top surface, said front surface and said back surface

~~having~~ has a generally rectangular shape;

wherein ~~with~~ the height of said front surface is greater than the height of said back surface;

wherein ~~so that~~ said two side surfaces are tapered; and

wherein ~~so that~~ a shingle placed flat on said top surface will extend back to said roof without substantially bending.

2. (original) The starter block of claim 1 wherein the width of said starter block is substantially equal to the width of said shingle.

3. (original) The starter block of claim 1 wherein the length of said starter block is substantially equal to the length of said shingle.

4. (original) The starter block of claim 1 further comprising at least one nailing zone on said top surface.
5. (original) The starter block of claim 4 wherein said at least one nailing zone is indented into said top surface.
6. (original) The starter block of claim 1 further comprising a first nib extending from one of said side surfaces.
7. (original) The starter block of claim 6 further comprising a second nib extending from the opposite side surface.
8. (original) The starter block of claim 1 wherein said composite material is a combination of at least a polymer component and a filler component.
9. (original) The starter block of claim 1 wherein the height of said front surface is about twice the height of said back surface.
10. (original) The starter block of claim 1 wherein the height of said front surface is 0.5 inches and said height of said back surface is 0.25 inches, and wherein the length of said top surface is 10 inches and the width of said top surface is 12 inches.

11. (original) The starter block of claim 1 wherein said top surface is configured to resemble slate.

12. (currently amended) A roofing system for covering and protecting a roof, said roofing system comprising:

a course of starter blocks coupled to the eaves of said roof, with each of said starter blocks having a unitary construction and comprising a top surface, two side surfaces, a front surface and a back surface, wherein each of said top surface, said front surface and said back surface ~~having~~ has a generally rectangular shape; wherein ~~with~~ the height of said front surface is greater than the height of said back surface; and wherein ~~so that~~ said two side surfaces are tapered; and

at least one course of shingles coupled to said roof, the first course of said shingles positioned to lie flat on and at least partially overlap said course of starter blocks with said shingles extending back to said roof without substantially bending.

13. (original) The roofing system of claim 12 wherein the width of each of said starter blocks is substantially equal to the width of one of said shingles.

14. (original) The roofing system of claim 12 wherein the length of each of said starter blocks is substantially equal to the length of one of said shingles.

15. (original) The roofing system of claim 12 wherein said starter blocks each have at least one nailing zone on their top surface.

16. (original) The roofing system claim 15 wherein said nailing zones are indented into said top surface.

17. (original) The roofing system of claim 12 wherein said starter blocks each have a first nib extending from one of said side surfaces.

18. (original) The roofing system of claim 17 wherein said starter blocks each have a second nib extending from the opposite side surface.

19. (original) The roofing system of claim 12 wherein said starter blocks and said shingles are formed from a composite material.

20. (original) The roofing system of claim 19 wherein said composite material is a combination of at least a polymer component and a filler component.

21. (original) The roofing system of claim 19 wherein the top surface of said starter blocks and said shingles are configured to resemble slate.

22. (original) The roofing system of claim 12 wherein the height of said starter block front surface is about twice the height of said starter block back surface.

23. (original) The roofing system of claim 12 wherein the height of said starter block front surface is 0.5 inches and said height of said starter block back surface is 0.25 inches, and wherein the length of said starter block top surface is 10 inches and the width of said starter block top surface is 12 inches.